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REVIEWS

John Ruskin, Social Reformer. By J. A. HOBSON. Boston: Dana, Estes & Co., 1898. Pp. ix+357.

A BOOK by Mr. Hobson is anticipated with exceptional interest by those who are looking for original contributions to the economic and sociological thought of today. In this book he might seem to have gone into a new field, and yet to have precluded the possibility of contributing anything original. One immediately discovers, however, that the writer is on familiar ground, though leading us in new paths. He has done several things remarkably well. In the first place, as a literary production, the bringing together of scattered and disconnected utterances into a system which should be logical without losing its literary form, is an achievement; in the second place, the discovery of a philosophy in Mr. Ruskin's writings will be to many people a revelation; in the third place, the tribute paid to Mr. Ruskin as an economist, though it may seem exaggerated to those who do not know his writings well, appears to be amply supported; finally, Mr. Hobson's personal contributions, by way of expounding or criticising Mr. Ruskin, are illuminating.

Mr. Hobson points out in the beginning how, in spite of no signs of interest in social movements in Mr. Ruskin's early life, there was a natural progression toward his later views, evidenced even in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, and not attaining full expression until quite late years.

Though incautious and sometimes extravagant in words, John Ruskin was a plodding and careful thinker; his thoughts had never been directed, by necessary contact with his early interests, to the social and economic structure of societies, and therefore he had never formed any definite convictions relating to them. Never being thrown into the eddying tide of any of the radical movements in politics or philosophy which marked that restless age, he was not impelled by contact with other fervent souls into hasty speculations or cheaply acquired convictions upon the fundamental problems of society.

Even after he had begun to express his social ideas, he suffered from the misfortune of having thought so thoroughly and written so lucidly.

No great writer has shown a more contemptuous disregard for those literary arts of concealment commonly used to secure an appearance of consistency; no one has so freely and loudly proclaimed his repudiation of past pronouncements upon important topics; in no case has this serviceable frankness been treated with such lack of courtesy and understanding. Because Mr. Ruskin has always striven to confer upon the public that greatest service which a thinker can confer, by making everything he writes "part of a great confession;" because he has set down all his thoughts and feelings in their natural order, without exaggeration or extenuation of their form and intensity, many of his critics have chosen to represent him as a loose and reckless thinker, borne along by sudden gusts of sentiment, and void of any stable unity of thought or clear order of development. Now the utter groundlessness of such criticism is demonstrable by anyone who takes the trouble to read his representative books in the order of their publication.

In addition to the influence exerted by Mr. Ruskin's scientific studies, Mr. Hobson points out his obligation to Turner and Carlyle: "Turner made him an art prophet, Carlyle a social reformer." Mr. Hobson shows the growth of Mr. Ruskin's ideas by giving a very admirable chronological summary of the steps by which he advanced from art to social reform, which he sums up in the statement:

Such is the general growth of Mr. Ruskin's thought and labors, from nature to art, through art to human life, in the art of life a growing sense of the demands of eternal law in the making and governance of human society founded on principles of justice and humanity.

Instead of abandoning

his proper work as an art teacher in order rashly to embark in political economy, for which he had neither natural aptitude nor the requisite training and knowledge, . . . Mr. Ruskin's first qualification is that of being a skilled specialist in the finer qualities of work on the one hand, and of enjoyment or consumption on the other hand. Both from personal practice and from long habits of close observation of the work of skillful men in many places, he obtained a wide and varied knowledge of the handling of different tools and materials for the production of useful and beautiful goods. This experience was by no means confined to painting, sculpture, and the so-called "fine arts," but comprised the practical work of architecture, wood and metal work, pottery, jewelry, weaving, and other handicrafts.

His investigations into agriculture, both on the continent of Europe and in Britain, were minute and painstaking; and though his experiments in reclaiming and draining land were not always successful, they indicated close knowledge of the concrete facts.

Moreover, Mr. Ruskin made a lifelong study of animal and vegetable life, and of the structure and composition of the earth, thus gaining an inti-

mate acquaintance with the nature of the raw materials of that wealth which formed the chief subject-matter of commercial economy. He had spent most of his laborious life in patient detailed observation of nature and the works of man. Both from contemporary observation and from study of history, the actual processes by which large classes of goods were produced and consumed were familiar to him. How many of the teachers of political economy who have been so scornful of Mr. Ruskin's claims possessed a tithe of this practical knowledge?

In addition Mr. Ruskin had as qualifications a remarkable mastery of language, fearless honesty, and at least one of "the most analytic" minds in Europe.

His arraignment of current political economy may be formally divided into two parts. Firstly, he accuses the science of commercial wealth of wrongfully assuming the title and function of political economy. Secondly, he impugns the accuracy of many of the fundamental doctrines of this commercial science, and imputes to them an injurious influence upon the happiness and morality of society.

Mr. Hobson seems to make out his case that Mr. Ruskin successfully controverted the claim of the older economists that they could isolate the hypothetical self-seeking man and then make allowance for the disturbing influence of other motives; he is especially successful in demonstrating that the "disturbing elements" are not of the same nature as the other influences. This has certainly led more than any other criticism of the older political economy to a wider interpretation by the later students. What Mr. Ruskin has also demonstrated, and what the newer economist does not always appreciate, is that when the latter

points out how raising the character of civic life will react upon the efficiency of industry, his arguments are so many tacit admissions that the segregation of purely industrial phenomena is not, in fact, the convenient hypothesis for political economy which he averred it was.

Mr. Hobson sums up his chapter which gives Mr. Ruskin's criticisms of current political economy in these words:

Our claim is not that Mr. Ruskin has formed a system of sociology, or that he has advanced far toward such a system, but that he has pointed the way to such a science, and has laid down certain hypotheses of fact and terminology such as are consistent with advances made independently by other scientific men. By insisting upon the reduction of all economic terms, such as value, cost, utility, etc., to terms of "vitality," by insisting upon the organic integrity and unity of all human activities, and the organic nature of the coöperation of the social units, and finally by furnishing a social ideal of

reasonable humanity, Mr. Ruskin has amply justified his claim as a pioneer in the theory of social economics.

Mr. Ruskin's "humanizing" of the term "wealth" takes the form of asking with regard to the value of goods: (1) What good human purpose can they serve? (2) What kind of persons will get them? (3) How much will each of these persons get? He also analyzes the problem of cost to correspond with his analysis of value, first inquiring as to the "intrinsic nature of the work in relation to the worker;" and second, "this determination of intrinsic cost requires to be supplemented by consideration of the capacities of the workers;" third, "in estimating the cost as we estimate the utility of a quantity of goods, we require to know how the labor is distributed."

Mr. Hobson does not fail to point out Mr. Ruskin's exaggerations and failure to see some of the merits in modern competitive industry, but he defends him against the charges made of totally ignoring the value of machinery and modern improvements, showing that these criticisms usually arise from a consideration of isolated observations, instead of following Mr. Ruskin's qualifications of his own statements. There is also pointed out Mr. Ruskin's inadequate appreciation of the significance of interest, showing that he fails to see the importance of making money serviceable where most needed. This recognition of Mr. Ruskin's weakness gives all the more force to Mr. Hobson's vigorous defense of Mr. Ruskin's constructive teachings which have seemed to so many chimerical. In spite of Tory politics and an undue confidence in the voluntary devotion of the upper classes to the lower, Mr. Ruskin's state socialism has largely triumphed thus far both over individualism and social democracy. His emphasis of the physiological basis of the social question, his admirable conception of education, his denial of equality while demanding equality of opportunity, his emphasis of the importance of agriculture, and his insistence on the general provision of employment, are obtaining more recognition every day. The strength and weakness of Mr. Ruskin's state socialism give Mr. Hobson an opportunity of, at the same time, criticising him and many current reformers, but show the futility of depending on the voluntary action of the upper classes and the necessity of constantly resorting to democratic action.

Mr. Hobson's closing chapters give a concise account of the industrial experiments which Mr. Ruskin undertook, and a final tribute to his work and influence, concluding with this paragraph:

To clarify the vision, to elevate the aim, to humanize, and so to dignify,

the ends of conduct, are the persistent endeavors of John Ruskin's teaching. His hope and his appeal as reformer of society is to those misdirected or ill-directed forces of character which have made us so successful as individuals and as nations in the grosser forms of activity, and which, well economized for nobler purposes, might secure for us a "greatness" measurable neither in miles of territory, millions of population, nor in volume of commerce, but in "the multiplication of human life at its highest standard."

This book will serve as a guide to the writings of Mr. Ruskin which should not only be invaluable to all students of his books, but should lead to a wider reading and appreciation of his work as a whole. It is a piece of work which probably only Mr. Hobson was prepared to do, and seems almost beyond criticism.

CHARLES ZUEBLIN.

Instinct and Reason: An Essay concerning the Relation of Instinct to Reason, with some Special Study of the Nature of Religion. By HENRY RUTGERS MARSHALL, M.A. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1898. Pp. vii + 574. \$3.50.

THIS is a large book on an old question, and one is prepared to find an important contribution to psychology in it, or to be somewhat annoyed. It turns out, however, that the volume is not primarily on the relation of instinct to reason, but is a biological plea for religion. Religion is regarded as a part of the machinery of natural selection, and the race has survived because through systems of religion checks have been established on individual conduct to the advantage of the group to which the individual belongs. Three classes of instincts are considered in some detail: (1) those of service to the individual; (2) those of service to the race, that is, relating to the reproduction of the race; and (3) those of service to the group. Religion, it is claimed, is an instinct, and an instinct of service to the group, its function being the regulation of group conduct. Mr. Marshall makes the very interesting claim, also, that, generally speaking, instinct is a safer guide than reason, reason being the variant principle, and instinct the beaten path. The standpoint naturally throws great stress upon the idea of duty, and the subordination of the individual. "Under my view, what is here called the suppression of our will to a higher will may be expressed in psychological terms as the restraint of individualistic impulses to racial ones; that such restraint has effect upon the moral character being, of course, granted" (p. 329). ". . . The function